

# ALABAMA STATE EXPENDITURE PLAN (SEP)

## Project #19: Meaher Park Improvements

### Project Description/Summary

- a) This project will support the planning, design, and implementation of 78 full-service campsites, including parking, bath houses, a fishing pier, and utility infrastructure to Meaher Park in Spanish Fort, Alabama. In addition, 10 RV park model cabins will be installed along with appropriate skirting, decking, steps, and/or ramps. This project will greatly increase and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities along a major east-west corridor used heavily by citizens and guests of Alabama.

According to the 2018 North American Camping Report, camping is rising in popularity across the US and Canada. The report also stated that Millennials and Gen Xers make up 75% of all campers; Millennials alone account for 40%; 59% of campers stay within 100 miles of home; and 42% stay at nearby national or state parks. Not only is Meaher situated on a major east-west highway corridor, it is also close to several large population centers.

Activities will also include the comprehensive administration of this grant, including, but not limited to, project development and oversight, contracting, and monitoring.

- a. **Need:** The funds provided by this grant will be used to design and construct much-needed additional campsites. This project would greatly increase and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities along a major east-west corridor heavily used by citizens and guests of Alabama. Meaher is a very popular park and its campground frequently fills to capacity. From October 2007 through September 2017, Meaher's campground occupancy rate averaged 78%, which includes weeks-long closures due to severe weather.

**Purpose:** The completion of this project will create a "destination park," serving many recreational, cultural, historical, and ecological points of interest and importance. Increased revenue from the new amenities will financially strengthen Meaher State Park. These new amenities will provide the opportunity for Alabama's citizens and guests to enjoy the abundant flora and fauna of the area, in addition to offering access to high-demand public outdoor recreation resources such as bank and pier fishing, boating, improved site camping, and small cabin lodging. Interpretive and educational information on critical habitats and ecosystems will be included, using a combination of "low tech" (i.e. signs, kiosks, etc.) as well as "high tech" (e.g. digital media) means. All portions of the new amenities will be handicapped accessible and inclusive.

**Objective:** The objectives of this project include:

- Develop a baseline in 2018 to establish number of visitors and monitor increases over time;
- Complete engineering and design; and
- Add 78 full-service campsites and 10 RV park model cabins with additional parking, bath houses, a fishing pier, and utility and

## ALABAMA STATE EXPENDITURE PLAN (SEP)

management infrastructure to enhance visitors' experience at Meaher State Park.

- b. This activity is located in the Gulf Coast region and will be carried out in the City of Spanish Fort in Baldwin County, Alabama.
  - c. This project is anticipated to begin on 7/1/19 and end 6/30/21 (2 years).
  - d. This project will be implemented by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, State Parks Division.
- b) This project will contribute to the economic recovery of the Gulf Coast Region by providing additional amenities at Meaher State Park, thus enhancing the visitors' experience and leading to increased traffic at the Park.

### Eligibility and Statutory Requirements

This activity is located in the Gulf Coast Region and is eligible for Spill Impact Component funding under Category #5 – Improvements to or on State Parks located in coastal areas affected by the DWH oil spill (primary). Secondary activities include Category #3 - Implementation of a federally approved marine, coastal, or comprehensive conservation management plan, including fisheries monitoring; Category #6 - Infrastructure projects benefiting the economy or ecological resources, including port infrastructure; and Category #10 - Promotion of tourism in the Gulf Coast Region, including recreational fishing.

### Comprehensive Plan Goals and Objectives

This project is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan goals:

- Goal 5: Restore and Revitalize the Gulf Economy – Enhance the sustainability and resiliency of the Gulf economy.

This project supports the following Comprehensive Plan objectives:

- Objective 6: Promote Natural Resource Stewardship and Environmental Education – Promote and enhance natural resource stewardship efforts that include formal and informal educational opportunities, professional development and training, communication, and actions for all ages.

### Major Milestones

- a) Milestone 1: Procure grant manager
- b) Milestone 2: Procure engineering and design firm
- c) Milestone 3: Complete engineering and design
- d) Milestone 4: Environmental permitting
- e) Milestone 5: Complete bids for construction

# ALABAMA STATE EXPENDITURE PLAN (SEP)

f) Milestone 6: Complete construction

## Success Criteria/Metrics/Outcomes

The anticipated outcome of the Meaher Park Improvements will be:

- Construction of 78 full service campsites, as well as parking, bath houses, a fishing pier, and utility and management infrastructure. In addition, 10 RV park model cabins will be installed along with appropriate skirting, decking, steps, and/or ramps

**Table 20. Proposed Projects Success Criteria/Metrics/Outcomes**

| Activity                                | Anticipated Project Success Criteria/Metrics   | Short-term outcome   | Long-term outcome   |
|---|--|--|---|
| Improved amenities at Meaher State Park | Construction of 78 full-service campsites<br><br>Construction of a parking lot, bath houses, fishing pier and utility and management infrastructure<br><br>Installation of 10 RV park model cabins<br><br>Increase number of campers by 15%<br><br>Increase website traffic by 25%<br><br>Increase social media followers by 15% | Increased number of camping and cabin guests<br><br>Additional traffic on website and social media | Creation of a “destination park,” serving many recreational, cultural, historical, and ecological points of interest and importance |

## Monitoring and Evaluation

- a) Submission of final E&D to ADCNR for review and approval
- b) Provide evidence to ADCNR that all required permits were obtained
- c) Submit all results of procurement/bid process to ADCNR prior to awarding contracts

## ALABAMA STATE EXPENDITURE PLAN (SEP)

- d) ADCNR will conduct periodic onsite reviews
- e) Submission of quarterly and final reports
- f) Post construction monitoring as required

### Best Available Science

A Best Available Science (BAS) review is required for programs and activities that would restore and protect the natural resources, ecosystems, fisheries, marine and wildlife habitats, beaches, coastal wetlands, and economy of the Gulf Coast. The primary focus of this project is to construct campsites and other amenities at Meaher State Park; therefore, BAS does not apply.

However, Best Management Practices will be employed in the design and development of this project. Where possible, ADCNR plans to use composite materials instead of treated lumber; permeable or semi-permeable parking and trail surfaces; renewable sources such as solar energy; and energy conserving fixtures and products such as LED lighting.

In addition, this project is consistent with the values and recommendations set forth in the MBNEP's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan 2013-2018, available on the MBNEP [website](#).

### Budget/Funding

- a) Estimated cost of the project and amount to be requested from Spill Impact Component Funds: \$3,553,500 (5-15% - Planning, 95-85% - Implementation). While it is noted that funding available under a grant award cannot exceed the amount described in the SEP for this project, the percentages listed in this section are estimated and will be more clearly cultivated in the grant application.
- b) No other funding sources are anticipated at this time.

### Partnerships/Collaboration (if applicable)

Not applicable at this time.

### Leveraged Resources (if applicable)

Not applicable at this time.

### Funds Used As Non-Federal Match (if applicable)

Not applicable at this time.

### Other

Not applicable at this time.

# ALABAMA STATE EXPENDITURE PLAN (SEP)



Figure 19. The Meaher Park Improvements project will be implemented along U.S. Highway 98 Battleship Parkway in Spanish Fort, Alabama.